



The Georgia Senate This Week

Senate Information Office ♦ 201 Legislative Office Building ♦ Atlanta, Georgia ♦ 404.656.0028

“HOPE Chest” Constitutional Amendment fails to get required 2/3 vote

*T*he two-thirds vote needed to send a proposed Constitutional Amendment to the House of Representatives failed to garner the necessary support on the Senate floor on Thursday. The vote, which came down mostly along party lines, followed a contentious debate after the Senate agreed to engross two bills affecting the HOPE Scholarship. The move prohibited members of the Senate from amending the language. Senate Resolution 655, which Lt. Gov. **Mark Taylor** called the “Governor’s HOPE-less” bill, failed to receive the 38 “super majority” votes needed.

“The chair is greatly disappointed by these developments,” Lt. Gov. **Taylor** said from the rostrum. “The majority party is moving again to silence the minority – moving to prevent amendments to two pieces [of legislation] today.”

The measure, carried by Sen. **Joseph Carter** of the 13th, is part of Gov. **Sonny Perdue**’s 2006 legislative package, and was designed to allow the people of Georgia to vote to limit lottery expenditures to the state’s HOPE Scholarship and the ever-popular pre-k program. Sen. **Carter** told his colleagues in the Senate that during a ten-year span, from 1993-2003, nearly \$2 billion in lottery funds was spent on things other than the HOPE Scholarship and Pre-K program.

*“If it looks like politics and walks like a duck, it’s a political duck.”
- Sen. Steve Thompson of the 33rd*

“The disbursements to educational institutions in Georgia include 437,000 scholarships to [students attending] public colleges and universities totaling \$1.83 billion,” Sen. **Carter** said during his presentation. He added that more than 116,000 students in private schools have received \$404,000 in HOPE Scholarships.

“Your action today can, and I hope will, enhance the lives of millions of Georgians for generations to come,” Sen. **Carter** concluded.

Sen. **Steen Miles** of the 43rd called the move to engross “election year politicking that does no good for the people of Georgia.”

“There are those pushing this and their motives are less than pure. Their motives are political,” Sen. **Tim Golden** of the 8th said.

The Senate is expected to revisit the vote on Friday.

Senate Bill 440, authored by Sen. **Bill Hamrick** of the 30th, did pass the Senate on Thursday, however. The “housekeeping bill” eliminates the construction reserve trust fund that is used for capital outlay projects and teacher training.

The Bill passed 45-9.

Governor’s *Classrooms First for Georgia Act* passes

*I*n an equally controversial piece of legislation, another piece of the Governor’s legislative package did pass the Senate this week. Senate Bill 390, sponsored by Sen. **Ronnie Chance** of the 16th, also known as the *Classrooms First for Georgia Act* or the 65 percent rule, mandates local school systems to spend at least 65 percent of its total operating funds on direct classroom expenditures.

These expenditures include classroom teachers, personnel, instruction supplies, field trips, music, athletics and private institutions for special education. Those items not included in the 65 percent rule consist of instructional support, including libraries and media specialists, teacher training, nurses, counselors and social workers, administration, food services and transportation.

“We are putting more money in the classroom,” Sen. **Chance** said. “Common sense should tell you that this is a good idea – if you need more proof, ask a teacher . . . as a parent. More money in the classroom leads to higher student achievement.”



The legislation was not without its detractors however.

“The way this thing is budgeted now, you can pay someone to mow the grass at the stadium, but you can’t pay someone to get on the Internet and learn how to design a new crop that is good for Georgia and good for our future,” Sen. **Sam Zamarripa** of the 36th said.

“This bill will not do anything to really enhance education in the state,” Sen. **Steve Henson** of the 41st said. “It will just be a smokescreen for politicians to say that they have.”

The measure passed 32-18. It now goes to the House for consideration.

Prayers for former Sen. Kemp

Former Sen. **Rene Kemp**, who served in the Senate for more than a decade is very ill, and has been hospitalized in Hinesville. His secretary at his law practice, Judy Shippey, has relayed to the Senate that Sen. **Kemp** is terminally ill, and has been made “comfortable” by his physicians.

Sen. **Kemp** represented Senate District 3 from 1992-2004 when he retired.

Please keep Sen. **Kemp** and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Honoring a great American

The Senate paused a moment on Wednesday to honor one of its own, the dean of the body, Sen. **Terrell Starr** of the 44th. Lt. Gov. **Mark Taylor**, President Pro Tempore **Eric Johnson** of the 1st and Senate Minority Whip **David Adelman** of the 42nd presented Sen. **Starr** with Senate Resolution 780, commending him for his service during World War II. **Sylvia Wygoda**, members of the Georgia Holocaust Commission and Holocaust survivors honored **Sen. Starr** with a statuette featuring the State Seal being carried by an American Bald Eagle.

“Sen. **Starr** and family, you honor me and you honor all of those here on behalf of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust by your presence here today,” said Sen. **Adelman**.

The resolution stated that our nation’s monumental accomplishments in the epic conflict of World War II were achieved only through the bravery, heroism, and sacrifices of Senator **Starr** and his generation.

CNN gets it WAY wrong

On Thursday, famed *CNN* news anchor **Wolf Blitzer** reported on his show “*The Situation Room*” that the Georgia Senate voted Wednesday to change the state flag.

“In Georgia there’s yet another push to change the state flag,” **Blitzer** said. “The State Senate yesterday approved a new flag resembling the banner of the Confederacy. Georgians have had three different state flags since 2001. This reflects more than a decade of wrangling over Confederate symbols and whether they’re offensive – particularly to African-Americans.”

The Senate Information Office checked on the accuracy of this report, and found that *CNN* had gotten it from a story in the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*.

But the Columbus paper didn’t get it wrong. They wrote a “this day in history” piece about when the Georgia flag was changed in **1956**. *CNN* apparently picked it up as something that happened **50** years later – in **2006**.

Word has it they issued a retraction . . . stay tuned. Meanwhile, here is the story that appeared in the *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* . . .

Senate OKs State Flag With Rebel Symbol Georgia will have a new state...

Senate OKs State Flag With Rebel Symbol Georgia will have a new state flag resembling the banner of the Confederacy if a Senate bill continues its march through the Legislature.

The Senate yesterday approved the measure 41-3 after hearing an impassioned appeal by a senator appropriately named Jeff Davis.

One-third of the new flag would be blue and contain a replica of the Georgia seal. The Confederate battle flag with crossed blue areas containing 13 white stars would cover the remainder of the flag, which is primarily red.

Georgia State Senate First Readers

(Thursday, January 26 – Thursday, February 2, 2006)

Senate Resolutions:

- SR 721** Kennesaw Youth Council/ Acworth Youth Council; recognize
Sens. **John Wiles** (37th) and **Judson Hill** (32nd)
Read and Adopted – 01/25/06
- SR 722** Georgia's State Parks and Historic Sites; recognize
Sens. **Ross Tolleson** (20th) and **John Bulloch** (11th)
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- SR 723** PAGE Day on Capitol Hill; February 14, 2006; recognize
Sens. **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** (24th); **Casey Cagle** (49th); **Dan Moody** (56th);
Brian Kemp (46th); **Greg Goggans** (7th); **Ralph Hudgens** (47th) and others
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- SR 724** Wilcox, Mr. and Mrs. Raleigh; commend
Sen. **Tommie Williams** (19th)
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- SR 725** Clayborn, Mrs. Lois Doggett; congratulate
Sen. **Terrell Starr** (44th)
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- SR 726** Haffamier, Robert J.; condolences
Sen. **Judson Hill** (32nd)
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- SR 727** Hickman, Richard Thomas; condolences
Sens. **Preston Smith** (52nd); **Tommie Williams** (19th); **Seth Harp** (29th);
Joseph Carter (13th); **Brian Kemp** (46th) and **John Wiles** (37th)
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- SR 728** Word, David M.; commend
Sen. **Ross Tolleson** (20th)
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- SR 729** Rome City Police Department; commend
Sen. **Preston Smith** (52nd)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 730** Masuyama, Kento; commend
Sen. **Ronnie Chance** (16th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 731** Jensen, Kevin Ross; recognize
Sen. **Ronnie Chance** (16th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 732** Rising Starr Middle School Band of Fayette County; Mr. Steven Tyndall;
commend
Sen. **Ronnie Chance** (16th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 733** Black Contractors Day in Georgia; February 2, 2006; recognize
Sens. **Robert Brown** (26th) and **Vincent Fort** (39th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06

- SR 734** Coosa High School; commend
Sens. **Preston Smith** (52nd) and **Don Thomas** (54th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 735** Youth Leadership Baldwin 2006; commend
Sen. **Johnny Grant** (25th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 736** Wingate, Sr., Mr. J. Alton; condolences
Sen. **Nancy Schaefer** (50th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 737** Ronald Reagan Day; February 6, 2006; recognize
Sens. **Don Balfour** (9th); **John Douglas** (17th);
Nancy Schaefer (50th) and **Preston Smith** (52nd)
Rules Committee – 01/31/06
- SR 738** Moody, Mr. Gerald; commend
Sen. **Seth Harp** (29th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 739** Wilson, Ms. Kimberly; commend
Sen. **Seth Harp** (29th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 740** Morton, Bishop Paul S.; Greater St. Stephen Full Gospel Church Day; declare
Sen. **Steen Miles** (43rd)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 741** Keep Georgia Beautiful Program; commend
Sen. **Ross Tolleson**
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 742** Neighborhood Playhouse; rename to Theatre Decatur; recognize
Sen. **David Adelman** (42nd)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 743** Community Health Centers Day; recognize
Sens. **Ross Tolleson** (20th); **Brian Kemp** (46th); **Cecil Staton** (18th);
Michael Meyer von Bremen (12th); **Jack Hill** (4th);
Seth Harp (29th) and others
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 744** Neal, Mr. Bernard; commend
Sen. **Preston Smith** (52nd)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 745** Ogawa, Honorable Shoji; Consul General of Japan; recognize
Sen. **David Adelman** (42nd)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 746** BOMA Day at the Capitol; declare January 31, 2006; recognize
Sens. **John Wiles** (37th) and **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** (24th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06
- SR 747** King, Mrs. Coretta Scott; condolences
Sens. **Eric Johnson** (1st); **Tommie Williams** (19th); **Robert Brown** (26th);
Valencia Seay (34th); **Gloria Butler** (55th); **J.B. Powell** (23rd) and others
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06

- SR 748** Harvey, Mr. and Mrs. Uhland; commend
Sen. **Tommie Williams** (19th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 749** Harris, Rev. Larry and Mrs. Janice; honoring
Sen. **Tommie Williams** (19th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 750** West, Mr. Buford and Joyce; honoring
Sen. **Tommie Williams** (19th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 751** Vaughan, John Matthew; commend
Sens. **Chip Rogers** (21st) and **Bill Stephens** (27th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 752** Richardson, Scott Alan; commend
Sens. **Chip Rogers** (21st) and **Bill Stephens** (27th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 753** Wilkinson, Donn Keegan; Eagle Scout; commend
Sen. **Greg Goggans** (7th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 754** Giddens, Ms. Jessica; congratulate
Sen. **Greg Goggans** (7th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 755** Cersey, Ms. Jane; condolences
Sen. **Greg Goggans** (7th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 756** Johnson, Devin; commend
Sen. **Ed Harbison** (15th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 757** Sanders, Mr. Larry; commend
Sen. **Ed Harbison** (15th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 758** Schuster, Mr. Marvin; commend
Sen. **Ed Harbison** (15th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 759** Bearden, Lieutenant Colonel Stacie; commend
Sen. **Ed Harbison** (15th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 760** Marlow, Dr. Eddie; condolences
Sens. **Don Thomas** (54th) and **Jeff Mullis** (53rd)
State Institutions and Property Committee – 02/01/06
- SR 761** Cohutta First Baptist church; commend
Sens. **Don Thomas** (54th) and **Jeff Mullis** (53rd)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 762** Merritt, United States Marine Lee; commend
Sens. **Judson Hill** (32nd); **Chip Rogers** (21st) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06

- SR 763** Israel, State of; bonds; commend Governor Perdue for authorizing purchase
Sens. **Judson Hill** (32nd); **Chip Rogers** (21st); **Don Balfour** (9th);
Ross Tolleson (20th); **Jeff Mullis** (53rd); **Nancy Schaefer** (50th) and others
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 764** Hamas; Palestinian elections; expressing dismay
Sens. **Judson Hill** (32nd); **Chip Rogers** (21st); **Don Balfour** (9th);
Ross Tolleson (20th); **Jeff Mullis** (53rd); **Eric Johnson** (1st) and others
Rules Committee – 02/01/06
- SR 765** Robertson, Sr., Johnnie; condolences
Sens. **Jack Hill** (4th); **Brian Kemp** (46th) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 766** Tippins, Jr., Mr. Eldred; commend
Sens. **Jack Hill** (4th) and **Tommie Williams** (19th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 767** Smith, Mr. Gary; commend
Sen. **Jack Hill** (4th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 768** 165th Airlift Wing of Savannah, Georgia; commend
Sens. **Jack Hill** (4th); **Eric Johnson** (1st); **Jeff Chapman** (3rd);
Regina Thomas (2nd) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 769** International Baccalaureate Diploma; granting undergraduate course credit;
urge Board of Regents to consider creating a program
Sens. **Eric Johnson** (1st); **Seth Harp** (29th) and **Dan Moody** (56th)
Higher Education Committee – 02/01/06
- SR 770** Ball, Marcus; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 771** Wade, Joyce; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 772** Nelson, Rosemarie; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 773** Ransom, Emanuel; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 774** Swaney, Lee; Mayor of Clarkston; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 775** Foster, Wayne; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 776** Nguyen, Hien Dai; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06

- SR 777** Davis-Morris, Pat; commend
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 778** Clarkston Health Collaborative; recognize
Sen. **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 779** Harris, Noah; condolences
Sens. **Chip Pearson** (51st); **Chip Rogers** (21st); **Don Thomas** (54th);
Judson Hill (32nd); **David Shafer** (48th); **John Wiles** (37th) and others
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 780** Starr, Senator Terrell; commend
Sens. **Eric Johnson** (1st); **Tommie Williams** (19th); **Robert Brown** (26th);
Jeff Mullis (53rd); **Valencia Seay** (34th); **George Hooks** (14th) and others
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 781** Lyon, Mrs. Amanda Green; condolences
Sen. **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 782** Joint Session; message from Major General William G. Webster, Jr.
Sens. **Eric Johnson** (1st); **Tommie Williams** (19th); **Jack Hill** (4th);
John Douglas (17th); **Ed Harbison** (15th); **John Wiles** (37th) and others
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 783** Muller, Lieutenant Colonel Gregory J.; condolences
Sens. **Eric Johnson** (1st) and **Regina Thomas** (2nd)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 784** Smart, Ms. Mary; congratulate
Sen. **Jeff Chapman** (3rd)
Read and Adopted – 02/01/06
- SR 785** Joint Comprehensive State Trauma Services Study Committee; create
Sens. **Eric Johnson** (1st); **Cecil Staton** (18th); **Tommie Williams** (19th);
Don Thomas (54th) and **Don Balfour** (9th)
Health and Human Services Committee – 02/02/06
- SR 786** Senate Equal Payday Study Committee; create
Sens. **Gloria Butler** (55th); **Robert Brown** (56th); **Steen Miles** (43rd);
Sam Zamarripa (36th); **Vincent Fort** (39th);
Emanuel Jones (10th) and others
Insurance and Labor Committee – 02/02/06
- SR 787** Deen, Ms. Paula; commend
Sens. **Eric Johnson** (1st); **Regina Thomas** (2nd); **Jeff Mullis** (53rd); **Don Balfour** (9th); **Nancy Schaefer** (50th); **John Douglas** (17th) and others
Read and Adopted – 02/02/06
- SR 788** Fort Yargo Elementary School students; commend
Sens. **Ralph Hudgens** (47th) and **Brian Kemp** (46th)
Read and Adopted – 02/02/06
- SR 789** Community Health, Dept. of; urge to revise Prenatal
(Obstetric/Newborn Level 1) Service Area 3 include Forsyth County
Sens. **Bill Stephens** (27th) and **Chip Pearson** (51st)
Rules Committee – 02/02/06

- SR. 790** CA: Government Records/ Meetings; performing a public purpose; open to the public
Sens. **David Adelman** (42nd); **Robert Brown** (26th); **Emanuel Jones** (10th); **Horacena Tate** (38th); **Doug Stoner** (6th); **Tim Golden** (8th) and others
Rules Committee – 02/02/06
- SR 791** Hill, Keegan P.; Eagle Scout; commend
Sen. **Ronnie Chance** (16th)
Read and Adopted – 02/02/06
- SR 792** Washington-Wilkes Tigers football team and coach; congratulate
Sen. **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** (24th)
Read and Adopted – 02/02/06
- SR 793** Ga. Public Defender Standards Council; ratifying the initial minimum standard; Standard for Removal for Cause
Sens. **Bill Hamrick** (30th) and **Preston Smith** (52nd)
Judiciary Committee – 02/02/06

Senate Bills:

- SB 370** License Plate, Special; promote agriculture in Georgia; provide for issuance, renewals, fees, donation of revenue
Sens. **Greg Goggans** (7th); **Brian Kemp** (46th); **John Bulloch** (11th); **Ross Tolleson** (20th); **Renee Unterman** (45th); **Mitch Seabaugh** (28th) and others
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 455** Privacy; customer proprietary network information broker; obtain or release customer information; provide penalties; exceptions
Sens. **David Shafer** (48th) and **John Wiles** (37th)
Science and Technology Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 456** Privacy; mobile telephone usage; unlawful to disseminate information without expressed consent of subscriber; penalties; exception
Sens. **John Wiles** (37th) and **David Shafer** (48th)
Science and Technology Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 457** State Employees, Former; service requirement for correctional officers injured by inmate; exemption; Medicare medical coverage
Sens. **Jack Hill** (4th) and **Tommie Williams** (19th)
Appropriations Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 458** Eminent Domain; nonbinding arbitration of proposed takings; review of legality
Sens. **Emanuel Jones** (10th); **Valencia Seay** (34th); **Gloria Butler** (55th); **Horacena Tate** (38th); **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th); **Robert Brown** (26th) and others
Judiciary Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 459** Eminent Domain; redefine blighted areas; condemnation of private property; governing authority of county/municipality
Sens. **Emanuel Jones** (10th); **Valencia Seay** (34th); **Gloria Butler** (55th); **Horacena Tate** (38th); **Robert Brown** (26th); **Doug Stoner** (6th) and others
Judiciary Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 460** Eminent Domain; require condemnors to negotiate in good faith; permit consideration in amount of compensation of property
Sens. **Emanuel Jones** (10th); **Valencia Seay** (34th); **Gloria Butler** (55th); **Horacena Tate** (55th); **Robert Brown** (26th); **Doug Stoner** (6th) and others
Judiciary Committee – 01/26/06

- SB 461** Eminent Domain; require condemnors provide notice of property owner's rights/description of condemnation process
Sens. **Emanuel Jones** (10th); **Valencia Seay** (34th); **Gloria Butler** (55th); **Horacena Tate** (38th); **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th); **Robert Brown** (26th) and others
Judiciary Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 462** Sheriffs; authority of courthouse security; remove courthouses/jails from list of properties protected
Sens. **Joseph Carter** (13th); **Brian Kemp** (46th); **Bill Hamrick** (30th); **Jeff Mullis** (53rd) and **Steen Miles** (43rd)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 463** Hunting Licenses; provide for veterans' lifetime sportsman's licenses/fees
Sen. **John Douglas** (17th)
Natural Resources and the Environment Committee – 01/26/06
- SB 464** *River Basin Protection Act*; define certain terms; provide exemptions; prohibit certain interbasin transfers
Sens. **Preston Smith** (52nd) and **Seth Harp** (29th)
Natural Resources and the Environment Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 465** General Provisions, O.C.G.A.; correct errors/omissions; reenact the statutory portion; provide necessary revisions/modernizations
Sens. **David Adelman** (42nd); **Preston Smith** (52nd) and **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th)
Special Judiciary Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 466** General Provisions, O.C.G.A; correct error/omissions in Title 47
Sens. **David Adelman** (42nd); **Preston Smith** (52nd) and **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th)
Special Judiciary Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 467** General Provisions, O.C.G.A; correct errors/omissions in Title 21
Sens. **David Adelman** (42nd); **Preston Smith** (52nd) and **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th)
Special Judiciary Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 468** *Quality Basic Education Act*; establishment of grant program for High Performance Principals; rules/regulations
Sens. **Dan Moody** (56th); **Joseph Carter** (13th); **John Douglas** (17th); **Johnny Grant** (25th); **John Bulloch** (11th) and **Ronnie Chance** (16th)
Education and Youth Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 469** Corporation, Partnerships and Associatons; update provisions
Sens. **Preston Smith** (52nd); **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th); **Seth Harp** (29th); and **Kasim Reed** (35th)
Special Judiciary Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 470** Cobb County, State Court; solicitor-general; change compensation
Sens. **John Wiles** (37th); **Doug Stoner** (6th); **Judson Hill** (32nd) and **Chip Rogers** (21st)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- SB 471** Sales Tax; jet fuel of certain qualifying airlines; provide for additional, limited period of time for exemption
Sen. **Kasim Reed** (35th)
Finance Committee – 02/01/06

- SB 472** Public Officers/Employees; provide for meritorious award program; definitions; establishment/implementation
Sen. **Chip Rogers** (21st)
Insurance and Labor Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 473** Georgia's Promise; students admission; authorize Board of Regents to promulgate rules/regulations
Sens. **Kasim Reed** (35th) and **Robert Brown** (26th)
Higher Education Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 474** *Student Health and Fitness Act*; establish health advisory councils; require local boards of education to adopt school health program
Sens. **Joseph Carter** (13th); **Don Thomas** (54th); **Dan Moody** (56th); **Chip Rogers** (21st); **Valencia Seay** (34th) and **Gloria Butler** (55th)
Education and Youth Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 475** Life Insurance; no insurer shall deny/refuse to accept an application; refuse to issue/renew contract
Sens. **Judson Hill** (32nd) and **Ralph Hudgens** (47th)
Insurance and Labor Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 476** *PeachKids Health Insurance for All Georgia Children Act*; enact; provide for eligibility, health care services, payment of premiums/copayments
Sens. **Steen Miles** (43rd); **Emanuel Jones** (10th); **Gloria Butler** (55th); **Regina Thomas** (2nd); **Valencia Seay** (34th); **Michael Meyer von Bremen** (12th) and others
Insurance and Labor Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 477** Corrections, Dept.; plans to construct, build, lease; require notification of local government with jurisdiction
Sen. **Steve Thompson** (33rd)
State Institutions and Property – 02/01/06
- SB 478** Sexual Offenses; committed upon persons having mental abnormality; enhanced penalty
Sen. **Steve Thompson** (33rd)
Judiciary Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 479** Human Resources, Dept.; plans to construct, build; require notification of local government with jurisdiction;
Sen. **Steve Thompson** (33rd)
Health and Human Services Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 480** *Georgia Qualified Medication Aide Act*; provide for delegation of certain nursing tasks; Georgia Board of Examiners of Licensed Practical Nurses
Sens. **Renee Unterman** (45th); **Don Thomas** (54th) and **Greg Goggans** (7th)
Health and Human Services Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 481** Motor Vehicles; registration/licensing; permit military personnel; minimum motor vehicles liability insurance through purchase in other states
Sens. **Bill Stephens** (27th); **John Douglas** (17th); **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** (24th); **Nancy Schaefer** (50th), **Cecil Staton** (18th); **Greg Goggans** (7th) and others
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 482** State Highway Employees; increase indemnification of those killed or disabled on the job
Sens. **Bill Stephens** (27th); **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** (24th) and **Cecil Staton** (18th)
Insurance and Labor Committee – 02/01/06

- SB 483** Public Roads; Dept. of Transportation conduct study of each county; identify road corridors
Sens. **Valencia Seay** (34th); **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** (24th); **Sam Zamarripa** (36th); **Kasim Reed** (35th); **Greg Goggans** (7th) ; **Jeff Chapman** (3rd) and others
Transportation Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 484** Colquitt, City of; declare as Georgia's First Mural City
Sen. **John Bulloch** (11th)
Rules Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 485** Rules of Road; persons convicted of speeding violations; display habitual speeder bumper sticker; condition of probation
Sens. **Nancy Schaefer** (50th); **Don Balfour** (9th) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 486** Employment Security Law; exempt direct sellers from definition of employment
Sens. **Don Balfour** (9th); **Nancy Schaefer** (50th); **Johnny Grant** (25th); **David Shafer** (48th) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Insurance and Labor Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 487** *Georgia Cigarette Fire Safety and Firefighter Protection Act*; prohibit the sale of cigarettes unless meet certain standards
Sens. **Don Balfour** (9th) and **Nancy Schaefer** (50th)
Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 488** Traffic Offenses; person convicted of driving under the influence with minor; county/district dept. of family/children service shall be notified
Sens. **Don Balfour** (9th) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 489** Drivers' Licenses; require certain specified new drivers to display a new driver bumper decal
Sens. **Don Balfour** (9th); **Nancy Schaefer** (50th) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 490** Traffic Offenses; persons convicted of driving under the influence; display a bumper sticker as condition of probation
Sens. **Don Balfour** (9th); **Nancy Schaefer** (50th) and **John Douglas** (17th)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 491** Traffic Offenses; persons driving under the influence; fifth or subsequent offense; guilty of a felony
Sens. **Nancy Schaefer** (50th); **Johnny Grant** (25th); **John Douglas** (17th) and **Don Balfour** (9th)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 492** Natural Resources; local governments shall not be denied state funding; failure to adopt stricter standards for certain streams/reservoir buffers
Sens. **Chip Pearson** (51st); **Don Balfour** (9th); **Mitch Seabaugh** (28th); **John Wiles** (37th) and **Chip Rogers** (21st)
Natural Resources and the Environment Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 493** Ad Valorem tax on property; provide exemption on undeveloped land areas within buffer zones established by law
Sens. **Chip Pearson** (51st); **Don Balfour** (9th); **Mitch Seabaugh** (28th); **John Wiles** (37th) and **Chip Rogers** (21st)
Natural Resources and the Environment Committee – 02/01/06

- SB 494** Courts; provide for a technology and court security fee to be collected in certain courts
Sens. **Jeff Mullis** (53rd); **Joseph Carter** (13th); **Preston Smith** (52nd); **Bill Hamrick** (30th); **Don Thomas** (54th) and **Nancy Schaefer** (50th)
Judiciary Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 495** Fire Hazards; increase in fees/charges; provide fee for blaster certification cards; require license prior to blast hole drilling
Sens. **Jeff Mullis** (53rd) and **David Shafer** (48th)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 496** Camden County; provide homestead exemption; ad valorem taxes for county purposes; definitions; terms/conditions
Sen. **Jeff Chapman** (3rd)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 497** Camden County; provide homestead exemption; ad valorem taxes for educational purposes; definitions; terms/conditions
Sen. **Jeff Chapman** (3rd)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- SB 498** Life Insurance; no insurer shall deny/refuse to accept an application; refuse to issue/renew contract
Sens. **Casey Cagle** (49th) and **David Adelman** (42nd)
Insurance and Labor Committee – 02/02/06
- SB 499** State Licensing Board for Residential/General Contractors; creation; appointments; meetings; change certain provisions
Sens. **Casey Cagle** (49th) and **Bill Stephens** (27th)
Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee – 02/02/06
- SB 500** *2006 Georgia Accuracy in Elections Act*; permanent paper record of votes; provide for pilot program
Sens. **Bill Stephens** (27th); **John Wiles** (37th) and **Cecil Staton** (18th)
State and Local Government Operations Committee – 02/02/06
- SB 501** Fulton County, Superior Court; supplement salaries of judges; increase amount
Sens. **David Shafer** (48th); **Kasim Reed** (35th); **Dan Moody** (56th); **Sam Zamarripa** (36th) and **Horacena Tate** (38th)
State and Local Government Operations Committee – 02/02/06
- SB 502** Motor Vehicles; operating while under the influence; comprehensive revision; modernization; reform laws of state
Sens. **Bill Hamrick** (30th); **Joseph Carter** (13th); **Preston Smith** (52nd); **Judson Hill** (32nd) and **John Wiles** (37th)
Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee – 02/02/06
- SB 503** Ga. Public Defender Standards Council; legal services to indigent persons; change provisions
Sens. **Bill Hamrick** (30th) and **Jack Hill** (4th)
Judiciary Committee – 02/02/06
- SB 504** State Properties Commission; certain state entities shall sell/make long-term leases of property
Sen. **Don Balfour** (9th)
State Institutions and Property Committee – 02/02/06
- SB 505** Mortgage Broker/Lender License; exempt certain exclusive agents
Sen. **Don Balfour** (9th); **Renee Unterman** (45th) and **David Shafer** (48th)
Banking and Financial Institutions Committee – 02/02/06

House Resolutions:

- HR 1114** Adjournment; relative to
Sen. **Jerry Keen** (179th)
Read and Adopted – 01/26/06
- HR 1041** J.T. Williams Honorary Bridge; designate
Reps. **Steve Davis** (109th); **John Lunsford** (110th); **Stan Watson** (91st);
Howard Mosby (90th); **John Yates** (73rd) and **Mike Barnes** (78th)
Transportation Committee – 02/01/06
- HR 1171** Barrett, Lonice C.; commend
Sens. **Glenn Richardson** (19th); **Jerry Keen** (179th);
Mark Burkhalter (50th); Jay Roberts (154th) and **Vance Smith** (129th)
Read and Adopted – 01/31/06

House Bills:

- HB 101** Peace Officers' Annuity and Benefit Fund; certain creditable service
Reps. **Tyrone Brooks** (63rd);
Bill Cummings (16th) and **Earnest Williams** (89th)
Retirement Committee – 02/02/06
- HB 494** Notaries public; additional qualifications; applications; amend provisions
Reps. **Edward Lindsey** (54th) and **Wendell Willard** (49th)
Judiciary Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 713** Ronald Reagan Day in Georgia; designate February 6 annually
Reps. **Bobby Franklin** (43rd); **Glenn Richardson** (19th);
Jerry Keen (179th); **Mark Burkhalter** (50th);
Earl Ehrhart (36th) and **Jill Chambers** (81st)
Rules Committee – 01/26/06
- HB 718** Pretrial intervention and diversion programs; authorize certain courts to
administer
Rep. **Edward Lindsey** (54th)
Judiciary Committee – 02/02/06
- HB 895** Judicial Retirement System; superior court judge or district attorney; creditable
service
Reps. **John Yates** (73rd); **John Lunsford** (110th);
David Knight (126th) and **Alan Powell** (29th)
Retirement Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 941** Archives and History, Division of; documents; religious heritage; recognize
Reps. **Tommy Benton** (31st); **England Terry** (108th);
Timothy Bearden (68th); **Hinson Mosley** (178th);
Gene Maddox (172nd) and **Jay Neal** (1st)
Rules Committee – 02/02/06
- HB 950** Public employees and students; celebration of holidays; prohibit restrictions
Reps. **Clay Cox** (102nd); **Mark Burkhalter** (50th); **Billy Horne** (71st);
Sue Burmeister (119th); **Harry Geisinger** (48th) and **Jeff May** (111th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 989** Clerks of superior courts; real estate or personal property filing fees; sunset
dates; change
Reps. **Barry Fleming** (117th); **Wendell Willard** (49th);
David Ralston (7th) and **Mark Hatfield** (177th)
Judiciary Committee – 02/02/06

- HB 999** Veterinarians and veterinary technicians; certain requirements; change provisions
Reps. **Gene Maddox** (172nd); **Mark Burkhalter** (50th); **Jerry Keen** (179th); **Tom McCall** (30th); **Robert Ray** (136th) and **Pete Warren** (122nd)
Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1020** Retirement; allowances; withdrawal of contributions; amend provisions
Reps. **Ben Bridges** (10th); **John Meadows** (5th); **Tyrone Brooks** (63rd); **Bill Cummings** (16th) and **Brooks Coleman** (97th)
Retirement Committee – 02/02/06
- HB 1034** Sandy Springs, City of; homestead exemption; certain residents; provisions
Reps. **Wendell Willard** (49th); **Joe Wilkinson** (52nd); **Edward Lindsey** (54th) and **Harry Geisinger** (48th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 1035** Sandy Springs, City of; homestead exemption; certain residents; provisions
Reps. **Wendell Willard** (49th); **Joe Wilkinson** (52nd); **Edward Lindsey** (54th) and **Harry Geisinger** (48th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 1036** Sandy Springs, City of; homestead exemption; certain residents; provisions
Reps. **Wendell Willard** (49th); **Joe Wilkinson** (52nd); **Edward Lindsey** (54th) and **Harry Geisinger** (48th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 1037** Sandy Springs, City of; homestead exemption; certain residents
Reps. **Wendell Willard** (49th); **Joe Wilkinson** (52nd); **Edward Lindsey** (54th) and **Harry Geisinger** (48th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 1038** Sandy Springs, City of; homestead exemption; certain residents
Reps. **Wendell Willard** (49th); **Joe Wilkinson** (52nd); **Edward Lindsey** (54th) and **Harry Geisinger** (48th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 1039** Sandy Springs, City of; exemption requirements; certain residents
Reps. **Wendell Willard** (49th); **Joe Wilkinson** (52nd); **Edward Lindsey** (54th) and **Harry Geisinger** (48th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/01/06
- HB 1068** Cobb County; Board of Education; election of members; amend
Reps. **Earl Ehrhart** (36th); **Steve Tumlin** (38th); **Don Parsons** (42nd); **Judy Manning** (32nd); **Rich Golick** (34th) and **Bobby Franklin** (43rd)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/26/06
- HB 1077** Nonpartisan elections; Rabun County; office of probate judge; provide
Rep. **Charles Jenkins** (8th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1078** Randolph County Water and Sewer Authority; create
Rep. **Gerald Greene** (149th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1079** Randolph County; board of elections; provide
Rep. **Gerald Greene** (149th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1087** Wayne County Industrial Development Authority; change number of members
Reps. **Hinson Mosley** (178th); **Roger Lane** (167th) and **Tommy Smith** (168th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06

- HB 1102** Coleman, City of; charter; abolish
Rep. **Gerald Greene** (149th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1117** Crawford County school district; homestead exemption; provisions
Rep. **Robert Ray** (136th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1118** Nonpartisan elections; Crawford County; office of probate judge; provide
Rep. **Robert Ray** (136th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1119** Nonpartisan election; Crawford County; office of chief magistrate; provide
Rep. **Robert Ray** (136th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1122** Peach County school district; homestead exemption; provisions
Reps. **Robert Ray** (136th) and **Lynmore James** (135th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 01/31/06
- HB 1124** Barrow County school district; homestead exemption; provisions
Reps. **Terry England** (108th) and **Tommy Benton** (31st)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/02/06
- HB 1132** Catoosa County; annual salary for judge of probate and clerk; amend
Reps. **Ronald Forster** (3rd); **Jay Neal** (1st) and **Tom Dickson** (6th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/02/06
- HB 1136** Dooly County Magistrate Court; technology fee; authorize
Reps. **Johnny Floyd** (147th) and **Lynmore James** (135th)
State and Local Governmental Operations Committee – 02/02/06

In Committee Action...

Agriculture and Consumer Affairs

On Thursday, February 2, Chairman **John Bulloch** of the 11th called the meeting to order to discuss three bills. Chairman **Bulloch** discussed *Senate Bill 441*, a housekeeping bill to adopt standards and requirements for milk and milk products. There was no discussion, and after the move to pass by Sen. **Steve Henson** of the 41st and seconded by Sen. **Ralph Hudgens** of the 47th, the bill passed out of committee unanimously. **Joe Cornelius** of the Georgia Blueberry Commission discussed *SB 447* which will, with a two-thirds majority by the legislature, create the Georgia Blueberry Commission. **Cornelius** explained how the commission would be set up and how it would be managed. Funds from assessments would go into research to improve blueberry production in Georgia. Agriculture Commissioner **Tommy Irvin** also spoke in favor of the commission and urged its support. Following numerous questions from all members of the Committee, it was moved to pass by Sen. **Hudgens**, seconded by Sen. **Brian Kemp** of the 46th, and approved unanimously. Rep. **Gene Maddox** of the 172nd presented *House Bill 999*, which makes changes to a number of definitions with regard to veterinarians and veterinary technicians. Dr. **Lee Myers** of the Department of Agriculture said that her department had reviewed and approved the changes. The legislation also has the support of the Georgia Veterinary Association. Sen. **Henson** moved to approve passage, Sen. **Greg Goggans** of the 7th seconded, and the bill passed out of committee unanimously. Sen. **Kemp** gave a brief update on *SB 380* which would create an equine commodities commission. He said that more study is needed and they are gathering input from the equine industry.

Appropriations

The Senate Appropriations Committee did not meet this week.

Banking and Financial Institutions

The Banking and Financial Institutions Committee did not meet this week.

Economic Development and Tourism

The Senate Economic Development and Tourism Committee did not meet this week.

Education and Youth

The Committee met on Tuesday, January 31, to consider three pieces of legislation. Majority Leader **Tommie Williams** of the 19th presented the Committee Substitute to *Senate Bill 79*, which would authorize local school systems to offer elective courses for students in grades 9-12. The bill ultimately would allow public school systems to offer an elective Bible course in grades 9-12. *SB 79* passed through by substitute with a unanimous vote. Governor Perdue's Education Policy Advisor **Jennifer Rippner** then presented *SB 468*, which would create a grant program to attract high-performance principals to secondary schools identified as "needs improvement" schools. Representatives of the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) and the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) spoke in support of the legislation, which passed out of committee by a unanimous vote. Next, **Allyson Anderson** of the Office of the Child Advocate presented *SB 442*, which prevents any person in charge of a hospital, school or agency from controlling, restraining, modifying or changing information regarding the reporting of child abuse. The bill also passed unanimously through committee.

Ethics

On Tuesday, January 31, Chairman **Renee Unterman** of the 45th called the first meeting of the 2006 session to order. Sen. **Bill Hamrick** of the 30th discussed *Senate Bill 409*. He explained that the bill is a result of a contested school board election in Carroll County. The legislation would require that the courts determine contested elections and primaries on an expedited basis. After questions from Sen. **Eric Johnson** of the 1st and Sen. **Don Balfour** of the 9th, Sen. **Don Thomas** of the 54th moved to pass, with Sen. **Dan Moody** of the 56th seconding, *SB 409* passed through committee unanimously. Before adjourning, Sen. **Unterman** noted that the rules for the committee had passed during the 2005 session and were effective through the 2006 session.

Finance

The Senate Finance Committee did not meet this week.

Health and Human Services

On Tuesday, January 31, Chairman **Don Thomas** of the 54th called the meeting to order to discuss *Senate Bill 330*. Speaking on behalf of the legislation were **Courtney Terwilliger**, president of the Georgia Association of Emergency Medical Services and **Kris Schleicher**, of the same organization. **Schleicher** explained that the bill expands the definitions for “emergency medical provider” and “emergency services” to include emergency pre-hospital health care and emergency medical transportation. The bill also amends language relating to coverage by insurance and health benefit plans. **Ben Henson**, owner of a Macon ambulance company, also spoke on behalf of the bill. **Kurt McGhee** with the Georgia Association of Health Plans spoke in opposition to *SB 330*. After numerous questions from committee members, Chairman **Thomas** said that the bill required more study and requested that the opposing parties work together and the Committee would take up the bill again at the next meeting.

Higher Education

The Senate Higher Education Committee did not meet this week.

Insurance and Labor

The Committee held its first meeting of the 2006 session on Tuesday, January 31. Chairman **Ralph Hudgens** of the 47th pulled *House Bill 425* off the agenda to review the legislation and promised to pick it up again. The Committee then held a public hearing on auto liability self-insurance status for the Mennonite Church. **Kenneth Kreider** of the Metter Mennonite Church and **Wayne Rudolph**, a representative of the Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, gave a presentation about how the use of liability insurance breaches Mennonite principles of brotherhood, personal responsibility and faith in God. They answered several questions from the Committee members. Then two representatives from the Commissioner of Insurance expressed support for the Mennonite Church’s proposal, but said that the current law must be changed to accommodate a liability exemption for groups and such legislation should be carefully worded to avoid abuse. Following more questions, the Committee adjourned for the day.

Interstate Cooperation

The Senate Interstate Cooperation Committee did not meet this week.

Judiciary

On Thursday, January 26, the Committee met to take up three bills on its agenda. To present *Senate Bill 398*, Sen. **Seth Harp** of the 29th was joined by **Gina Simpson**, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and **Jim DeGroot**, Director of the Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Office of Health Services of the Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC). The bill makes procedural changes when a plea of insanity or mental retardation is made. Current law allows the defendant to be placed with either the DOC or the DHR, depending on the defendant's condition. The bill places the defendant in the custody of the DOC and in the case of mental retardation; a temporary hospitalization at a DHR facility may be included. The bill passed unanimously. Sen. **Cecil Staton** of the 18th then presented *SB 393*, which provides for enhanced penalties for certain aggravated violations of stalking. **Shelly Senterfitt**, representing the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, brought forward a stalking victim to share her story with the Committee. There was some concern over conflicting language in the bill and Chairman **Preston Smith** of the 52nd appointed a subcommittee consisting of Sens. **Michael Meyer von Bremen** of the 12th, **Kasim Reed** of the 35th, **Judson Hill** of the 32nd and **Harp** to work with Legislative Counsel to clarify the language in the bill. Sen. **Hill** of the 32nd then presented *SB 408*. Currently there are five situations where deposition evidence will be accepted from a witness in a criminal proceeding in place of witness testimony. This bill adds a sixth option when the potential material witness is a foreign national who has not been admitted for permanent residence in the United States. **Chuck Olsen** of the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council testified in support of the bill citing cases where material witnesses have been deported prior to their testimony in court. The bill passed unanimously.

The Committee again met on Tuesday, January 31, and took up *SB 396*. Sen. **Greg Goggans** of the 7th presented the bill, which provides that if a law-abiding citizen is in any place where he legally has the right to be and reasonably believes it necessary to use force—even deadly force—to prevent death to himself or another, then he has no duty to retreat and may meet force with force. Representatives of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of North Georgia testified against the bill. **Marion Hammer**, representing the National Rifle Association, testified in support of the legislation. Chairman **Smith** raised some concerns that the bill might actually weaken Georgia's self defense statutes rather than strengthen them as the author had intended. Sen. **Goggans** asked that the Committee move forward with the bill and stated that he would work with the Committee to look into those concerns before the bill receive final passage. *SB 396* passed unanimously.

Natural Resources and Environment

On Wednesday, February 1, the Committee met to take up *Senate Bill 434*. Sen. **Ed Harbison** of the 15th presented the bill, which authorizes the State Board of Registration for Professional Geologists to require a geologist who is applying for renewal to complete continuing education courses approved by the Board. After questions and discussion by the Committee, Chairman **Ross Tolleson** of the 20th asked if any geologists or members of the Board were present to support or oppose the bill. There was nobody present to testify either way, so Chairman **Tolleson** asked to hold off on action on the bill until the next meeting so that they could hear from those most affected by the measure.

Public Safety and Homeland Security

On Wednesday February 1, Sen. **Brian Kemp** of the 46th called the committee to order to hear testimony on four pieces of legislation. *Senate Bill 64* allows law enforcement agencies around the state to use blue lights that are not mounted to the roof of a patrol car. It also changes state law to allow drivers to turn on their hazard lights and slow to less than 50 miles an hour to find a safe spot to pull over when stopped by an officer. Sen. **John Douglas** of the 17th introduced the bill to the Committee along with Georgia's Public Safety Commissioner **Bill Hitchens**. They told members that the changes will help law enforcement do a better job of stopping reckless drivers, by making patrol cars less visible to those who blatantly break the law. After much discussion, the bill was tabled in committee to make the changes. *SB 381* was then approved. This bill is a proposal to furnish a state flag to any public safety officer killed in the line of duty in the state. The committee also approved *SB 373*, which provides free driver's licenses to the spouses of Georgia soldiers killed in the line of duty, and

SB 400, which allows the use of road-ready all terrain vehicles for law enforcement only. With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Reapportionment and Redistricting

The Senate Reapportionment and Redistricting Committee did not meet.

Regulated Industries and Utilities

On Wednesday, February 1, Chairman **Mitch Seabaugh** of the 28th called the meeting to order to hear the Senate Home Heating Fuels Study Committee report and status update. Following the presentation of the report, a number of speakers addressed the status of the home heating challenge, including **Lindsay Thomas**, Senior Vice President of Atlanta Gas Light Company; **Martha Okafor**, Director of the Office of Family Independence, Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR); **Janet Joseph**, Executive Director, Heating Energy Assistant Team; **Stan Wise**, Commissioner, Georgia Public Service Commission (PSC); **Brett Newsom**, Director, SCANA Energy Regulatory Affairs & Pricing; **Scott Tolleson**, Manager of Member Support, Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia, and **Joe Monroe**, Vice President of External Affairs, Georgia Natural Gas. **Thomas** discussed the need for the natural gas pipeline between Georgia's Elba Island and the Port of Savannah, which he called economically feasible. **Okafor** and **Joseph** discussed the available programs for providing heating assistance to low-income families, which are partnered through DHR. Commissioner **Wise** presented the work of the PSC with regard to consumer education, consumer protection and conversation efforts. **Tolleson** discussed the availability of liquid natural gas (LNG), including the Association's purchase of in-ground reserves around the country, as well as work in alternative energy sources such as creating energy from wood, technology and bio-waste. **Newsom** and **Monroe** discussed the issues of home heating from the perspective of their respective companies, noting that while the bills reflecting December heating costs were very high, it was expected that with the mild weather in January and with the increased LNG supply, costs would go down.

Retirement

The Senate Retirement Committee did not meet this week.

Rules

The Senate Rules Committee did not meet as a standing committee this week.

Science and Technology

Chairman **David Shafer** of the 48th called the meeting to order on Tuesday, January 31. First, the Committee recognized **Jill Johnson** from Georgia Public Interest Research Group who expressed support for *Senate Bill 395*, a bill prohibiting cellular telephone service providers from extending contracts if customers request change or level in service. Sen. **Shafer** then assigned *SB 395* to a subcommittee consisting of Sens. **Cecil Staton** of the 18th, **J.B. Powell** of the 23rd and **Shafer**. Then Sen. **Staton** spoke to support *SB 394*, a bill prohibiting the solicitation of identifying information from a person via an e-mail, website or other use of the Internet by a person falsely representing a business. The Committee again heard from **Johnson**, who expressed support for the bill. After a motion was made, the bill was unanimously passed. Sen. **Shafer** then assigned *SB 455*, which prohibits the distribution of personal and customer information by telecommunications carriers, to a subcommittee consisting of Sens. **Sam Zamarripa** of the 36th, **Staton** and **Shafer**. Sen. **Shafer** introduced *SB 241* to the Committee. *SB 241* changes provisions relating to the legal effect of electronic records and signatures, provisions relating to notarized documents and the filing of documents by electronic means. The bill was unanimously passed by the Committee. Then the Committee recognized Sen. **Greg Goggans** of the 7th, who made a presentation on *SB 425*, which would create an e-mail registry for children, families and adults and protect those on the registry from e-mail advertisements prohibited to minors by law. The Committee then recognized **Matthew Prince**, CEO of Unspam Technologies, who gave a

presentation based on his experience as a vendor for a similar program in Michigan and Utah. Both Sen. **Goggans** and **Prince** yielded to questions from Committee members. During questioning, Sen. **Shafer** suggested changing language in the bill from “request” to “contact point” to avoid confusion. Sen. **Goggans** did not object to the change. Sen. **John Douglas** of the 17th made a motion to pass the bill, but then Sen. **Bill Heath** of the 31st made a motion to move the bill to a subcommittee. Sen. **Douglas** withdrew his motion. The motion to move the bill to subcommittee failed. Then the Committee voted unanimously to approve a substitute in which a vendor could send e-mails about tobacco, alcohol, etc., provided the registered recipient present a verifiable ID to the vendor. The substitute to *SB 425* passed unanimously. Then the Committee heard comments from the audience. A motion to report out *SB 625* as amended was seconded and passed with unanimous consent.

Special Judiciary

On Wednesday, February 1, the Committee met to take up the annual house-cleaning bills that correct typographical, stylistic, capitalization, punctuation and other errors and omissions in Georgia Code. Sen. **David Adelman** of the 42nd presented the bills and asked **Wayne Allen** of Legislative Counsel to walk the Committee through the process of identifying errors and making corrections. The corrections are divided into three separate bills: *Senate Bill 465*, dealing with general Code revisions; *SB 466*, dealing with retirement and pensions Code; and *SB 467*, dealing with elections Code. All three bills passed unanimously. Rep. **David Ralston** of the 7th then presented *House Bill 804*, which repeals the offense of barratry. Under current law, a person commits the offense of barratry when they excite or stir up groundless actions in courts or solicits or encourages the institution of a judicial proceeding. Rep. **Ralston** noted that this was an antiquated law, rarely—if ever—enforced and that offenses such as these are covered in other sections of the law. The bill passed unanimously.

State and Local Governmental Operations

On Tuesday, January 31, Chairman **John Wiles** of the 37th called the meeting to order. Two bills were presented. *Senate Bill 450* is designed to make changes to the pay scales for county officials, including clerks, judges, sheriffs and tax commissioners. Sen. **Brian Kemp** of the 46th presented the bill, telling the Committee that the bill is needed to equalize the salaries, and provide a much needed cost of living increase. The changes will not require any budget changes for the current fiscal year. The Committee substitute was approved that made minor changes to the pay scale, and was unanimously approved. *SB 202* was presented by Sen. **Wiles**. The bill will require institutions that receive state grant money to report the spending to the state auditor. Sen. **Wiles** told the Committee that the bill will increase accountability for agencies that receive state funding. The bill was passed out of Committee with no objections.

On Thursday, February 2, the Committee heard a presentation by Dr. **James Ledbetter** and **Sabrina Keith** of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government on the Tax and Expenditure Data Center for Georgia Local Governments (TED). The program allows people to learn more about local fiscal conditions in city and country governments throughout Georgia and **Keith** explained in detail how the program works. Following the presentation, the Committee asked numerous questions.

State Institutions and Property

The Committee met with their counterparts from the house on Monday, January 30. Committee Chair Sen. **Johnny Grant** of the 25th and House Chairman Rep. **Terry Barnard** of the 56th called the meeting to order. The Committee is continuing their fact-finding hearings on vending contracts for state prison commissary operations. This week the Committee heard from **Bruce Bowers** and several vendors representing the Georgia Association of Commissary Suppliers. The suppliers represent many of the current contract holders with the state prison system. Bowers explained how the current situation works, and steps that are taken to ensure security, and proper distribution of supplies to state commissaries. The Committee also heard from **Tyler Alcore** with Keefe Group who explained the benefits of a single vendor system for commissary operations. The Group runs

a nationwide commissary supply operations with locations in Georgia. With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Transportation

Chairman **Bill Stephens** of the 27th called the meeting to order on Wednesday, February 1, to consider several bills. First, the Committee heard a brief presentation from **Ted Turner** of PCID and **Tad Leithead** of CID Alliance on the benefits of community improvement districts (CID). Sen. **Mitch Seabaugh** of the 28th then presented *Senate Resolution 639*, which designates the *Sergeant Mike Stokely Memorial Highway* in Fayette County. The resolution passed through committee unanimously. Sen. **Steve Henson** of the 41st presented *SR 718*, which dedicates the Stephen J. Schmidt, Sr. Memorial Highway in DeKalb County. This road-naming resolution was also unanimously passed out of committee. Representatives **Steve Davis** of the 109th and **Barry Loudermilk** of the 14th presented the Substitute to *House Resolution 1041*, which combines four road-naming resolutions. The road-dedication package also passed through committee by a unanimous vote. Vice-Chairman **Jim Whitehead, Sr.** of the 24th and Deputy Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner **Larry Dent** then presented the Committee Substitute to *Senate Bill 431*, which would authorize the DOT to order the removal and relocation of a utility facility that occupies any part of the public road system. Ultimately, the bill would give the DOT the right to suspend contractors' work permits if they failed to handle utilities work on a public road project in a timely fashion. After lengthy discussion, Chairman **Stephens** moved *SB 431* to a subcommittee for further study, and appointed Sens. **Whitehead, Seabaugh, Steve Thompson** of the 33rd and **Bill Heath** of the 31st to study the bill. Next, Sen. **Brian Kemp** of the 46th presented *SB 453*, which would require that at least two percent of all fuel purchased annually by local school districts be biodiesel fuel by January 1, 2010. Sen. **Kemp** also introduced an amendment to the bill that specifies if the cost of biodiesel fuel exceeds 105 percent of the cost of conventional fuels, school systems may continue to purchase conventional fuel. Representatives of the Georgia Petroleum Council and the Georgia Oilmen's Association spoke against the bill, expressing concerns about the current quality and limited availability of biodiesel fuels. Others spoke in favor of the bill, including representatives of University of Georgia's Agriculture program and U.S. Biofuels of Rome, and *SB 453* passed through Committee as amended by a unanimous vote.

Veterans and Military Affairs

The Senate Veterans and Military Affairs Committee did not meet this week.

Joint Economic Development and Finance Committee

On Thursday, January 26, Chairman **Casey Cagle** of the 49th and Chairman **Jeff Mullis** of the 53rd welcomed the Joint Economic Development and Finance Committee to hear from labor and economic experts regarding the Ford and General Motors plant closings in Georgia. The Committee first heard from **Craig S. Lesser**, Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development, who summarized the state's past negotiations with GM and Ford. He stressed employee retraining and education and reaching out to local small businesses that depend on these plants. Then **Michael Thurmond**, Commissioner of the Department of Labor, addressed the financial and emotional challenges facing laid-off employees, and presented strategies which DOL plans to implement. Both **Thurmond** and **Lesser** yielded to questions from committee members concerning globalization, Georgia's relationship with the auto plants and education. Dr. **Kenneth J. Heaghney**, State Economist, gave an optimistic assessment by highlighting the number of GM and Ford employees eligible for retirement and the State's continuing economic growth. He estimated Georgia may lose 9,200 jobs related to and surrounding the auto plants, but he also noted that Georgia added 62,000 new jobs in the last five months. Then the Committee heard from **Ray Jenkins**, Mayor of Doraville, and **Robin Howarth**, Director of Economic Development for the City of Hapeville, who both expressed optimism and thanks to the Committees. A representative from the Ford Motor Company assured the Committees that Georgia did everything possible to keep the Hapeville plant open and praised the Governor for his efforts. The Committee also heard comments and concerns from audience members before adjourning.

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